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11 May 1959

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CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE

BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

11 May 1959

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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USSR: Soviet news media have announced that the Soviet party central committee will convene on 24 June and have outlined its agenda. Publication of such a meeting so far in advance is contrary to past practice. The convening of the plenum reflects determination to maintain heavy pressure for fulfillment of its Seven-Year Plan economic goals. The plenum is to discuss implementation of key sectors of the economic program--expansion of the chemical industry and further mechanization of industry--only a few months after the party congress formally approved the plan. Economic officials apparently have been put on notice that they can expect periodic accountings to high party authorities. The plenum may also be given a formal briefing on the outcome of the Geneva foreign ministers' meeting.

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OK

USSR census: The Soviet Union has announced that its total population was 208,800,000 in January 1959, as indicated by the results of the first general census taken since 1939. This total is only about 800,000 smaller than current US estimates, but the number of males is about 5,000,000 smaller and the urban population about 5,000,000 larger than estimated. The Soviet population is currently growing at a rate of 1.7 percent per year, which is about the same as that of the United States. [redacted]

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USSR-Geneva: A Soviet commentary on Secretary Herter's speech of 7 May claims that he has "compromised faith in the good intentions of the Western powers" by his stand on Western rights in West Berlin--"that the West would not yield one inch." The broadcast, maintaining that the Western package plan for Germany was based on the concept of free elections, attacked it as a sign that the West intends to follow "a line of rigidity and pressure" at Geneva.

[redacted]

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*Somalia: Prime Minister Issa's action in accepting the resignation of Minister of Interior Bogor, an influential tribal leader, has precipitated a government crisis in the Italian Trust Territory of Somalia and threatens to cause a split along tribal lines in the governing party, the Somali Youth League (SYL). The issue of a party split is expected to come to a head at the SYL party congress, scheduled to begin on 16 May. Political instability resulting from a party split along tribal lines would further outside influence, especially from the UAR.

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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet Central Committee Meeting Scheduled

Moscow announced on 9 May that a plenum of the Soviet Communist party central committee is scheduled to begin on 24 June. The plenum will discuss implementation of directives laid down at the party congress in January on the extension of mechanization and automation in Soviet industry.

For various reasons--preoccupation with maximum output at the expense of efficiency being one of the more important--the level of Soviet technology varies both between and within the several sectors of the economy. Under the theme of "catching up with the West," the gap between "average" and "best" practices in Soviet production is to be narrowed considerably by 1965; the agenda for the June meeting suggests that such improvements are to receive immediate impetus.

The plenum will also review the first year of the program to expand the Soviet chemical industry by an outlay of between 15 and 20 billion dollars. This program, outlined by Khrushchev at a May 1958 plenum, appears to be in jeopardy unless increased amounts of chemical equipment can be procured from the West.

Before last December's central committee meeting, which the Soviet press reported on a day-to-day basis, public announcement of plenums had always been withheld until their conclusion. The advance notification of the June meeting and of its principal agenda topics may be a further step in stripping the secrecy from central committee sessions in cases where this secrecy is self-defeating. In the present instance, fuller publicity for the central committee proceedings will help goad economic officials toward maximum performance and will indicate that the party intends to maintain constant pressure for fulfillment of the Seven-Year Plan goals.

Although the central committee has little or no substantive role in the formulation of foreign policy, the timing of the plenum would permit the Soviet leadership to review the results of the Geneva conference and the USSR's pre-summit position for the benefit of top party officials.

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USSR Census

The USSR has announced that its total population at the beginning of 1959, as determined by a nationwide census conducted during the week of 13-22 January, was 208,800,000. This figure is essentially in line with the last Soviet estimate--200,200,000 in April 1956--and with subsequent Soviet statements of the rate of increase. The announcement states that the total population has increased 18.1 million, or 9.5 percent, since 1939, the date of the last Soviet census, and places the total urban population at 99,800,000--about 5,000,000 more than estimated by the United States.

If the latest census was conducted as planned, the results should be quite reliable. It was planned as a house-to-house canvass of the entire country, to be carried out by a staff of 500,000 persons.

The figures show there are 94,000,000 men and 114,800,000 women in the USSR, the excess of women being the result of two world wars. Since US estimates had placed the number of men at about 99,000,000, the United States may have overestimated the size of the military age group.

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Split in Somalia's Governing Party Appears Imminent

The long-expected split in Somalia's moderate governing party--the Somali Youth League (SYL)--may be imminent following the government's acceptance on 8 May of Minister of Interior Hagi Musa Bogor's resignation. Hagi Musa is the recognized leader of the Darots--the country's second largest tribal group--and they, together with the politically advanced Hawias, constitute the coalition SYL. The Darots frequently have charged the Hawias with using their government positions to increase their control over the SYL and their prestige in the government. This issue prompted Hagi Musa to precipitate a government crisis in December 1957.

Hagi Musa's surprise resignation, which set off a governmental crisis, resulted from his unilateral order--against the will of the prime minister, who is a Hawia--to withdraw the 25 February ban imposed by the government on two smaller parties accused of inciting violence preceding the March parliamentary elections. The resignation must be confirmed by the Italian administrator, but in the past he has always supported the prime minister.

As a result of his resignation, Hagi Musa probably will either leave the SYL voluntarily or be expelled from the party at its forthcoming party congress, which is scheduled to begin on 16 May to consider the composition of the government for the next five years. Hagi Musa then may join the UAR-supported Greater Somalia League--one of the two parties banned by the government on 25 February--or form a new party composed largely of Darots.

The semblance of political unity which the SYL sought to preserve before the world and the United Nations, at least until the country achieved independence in December 1960, will end abruptly if the party splits along party lines. Moreover, the political instability which would result from such a split would provide an atmosphere conducive to further outside influence, especially from the UAR.

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